

**Testimony Relating to HB 5450
and
the Establishment of a
State Basic Health Program**

**Before the
Human Services Committee
March 13, 2012**

My name is Edwin Norse, I live in Middletown, and I currently serve as Chair of the Board of the Mental Health Association of Connecticut, serving most of the area of Western Connecticut for individuals who struggle with mental illness.

What you have before you appears for all intensive purposes to be a win-win situation.

With 75,000 in this state with \$15,000 to \$22,000 a year of total income, health insurance coverage is not a viable option, and so they must often live without the necessary medical care that most of us enjoy. The availability of a plan that can provide coverage to them, similar to Medicaid, while at the same time saving the state \$48 million, is almost unbelievable. Those who have researched and whom are shaping this into legislation are to be congratulated,

It is more and more difficult for an individual to even find a doctor who takes Medicaid, and with the changes planned in the Medicaid, there is little doubt that it will be impossible for folks in this income level to receive all the care that they need.

So this might not be a final best solution, but it will go a long way to relieving a lot of pain and suffering on the part of people who are already burdened with mental handicaps, and that in these times is a laudable thing.

With thanks for your attention to this important step as well.

s/ Edwin M. Norse
Edwin M. Norse
Chair
Mental Health Association of Connecticut